

WHO RULES?

BY LADY COOK, nee TENNESSEE CLAFLIN.

Nothing is more remarkable for its persistency than a popular delusion. Born of error and bred by ignorance, it sneaks into life unnoticed and takes centuries in killing. One rarely knows its parentage or date of birth, yet the foundling refuses to die. It resembles those animals of which zoologists tell us that, if chopped into mince-meat, each particle starts afresh and becomes a new creature. When we think we slay it we make it very much alive; as we try to destroy we re-create. Truth is fragile, short-lived, unobtrusive, easily obscured, cold, naked, unpalatable; but a lie is tough, perennial, bold, inextinguishable, fervent, well vested, and sweet to the taste. Suppress it here and it will rise there. Its elasticity is under all circumstances. Its vitality scoffs at time and death.

But of all forms of falsehood commend us to popular delusions Mr. Harry Furniss and his friends may dine thirteen together twice a day, may rehearse and practice any number of farcical efforts to exorcise these, and will only be laughed at for their pains. Or they may perchance scotch a weak delusion now and then, but they will never annihilate it.

Nevertheless, though we fail in the endeavor, there is one we would attack. It has come down to us through the ages from the mists of antiquity, venerated and universally believed. With savage and civilized, orthodox, heterodox, wise and simple, it is a world-wide creed in regard to the sexes that it is the man who rules. Woman is the inferior, the subordinate, the one to obey. Man is her lord and master to whose behests she must submit. We should be sorry to produce a rebellion in any well regulated home, or to stir the meekest wives to revolt, but from a habit of looking popular frauds in the face and challenging them to searching inspection, we ask, Who Rules? Who sways the rod of empire, in the court, the camp, the home and society? Man or woman?

Now we cheerfully admit that man is a very noble animal. He is sagacious, muscular, generous, ambitious, courageous, and when spurred, is capable of great effort. But he is deficient in sensibility, in tact, penetration and patience, and is idle by nature. He dissembles badly. He does not know how to wait. He regards the surface of things chiefly. He is guided by appetite, passion, self-interest, although an excellent reasoner. But long ages of more or disguised slavery have sharpened woman's wits. She is subtle, quick, observant, a good dissembler, patient, profoundly penetrative. She scents a motive as readily as a dog scents a hare. She is sensitive to every mood and tense of thought and feeling of others. She is a born diplomatist. Her feelings are those of a subordinate class, jealousy and vindictiveness. But she has abundantly learned the two great lessons which qualify for heroism and command:—to endure and to obey. There is no self-sacrifice of which she is not capable when urged by love, no torture too powerful, no patience too great for her passive and indomitable resistance. And when beauty is added to determination, she is perfectly irresistible.

Thus men by their own selfishness in the past, have unwittingly fashioned a creature to rule over them. In subjecting woman they taught her how to subject themselves, but by more subtle and more delicate means. By long processes of selection for their own gratification they have rendered her soft, graceful and of winning charm of form and manner. The greater their perception and power of appreciation, the greater is her dominion over them. The noblest and most heroic amongst them are those who have been most notably subdued. Who is there in the records of history and mythology who ever achieved distinction and was not conquered by her? Samson, David, Solomon, Hercules, Achilles, Caesar, Antony, Alexander, Pericles, Napoleon and Nelson, and numberless other heroes and statesmen, with all the host of painters and poets and men of mind. Even the gods humbled themselves before her.

If these things were done in the green days of womanhood, what shall be done when she shall have attained her fullness of power, in the flush and summer glory of her intellectual development? We are but at the beginning of a new era in her history, the era of mental and social emancipation. It is not long since she was denied a liberal education, when learning was opprobrious and science withheld. The ignorance of thousands of women of good position almost equalled that of their sisters in eastern harems, where they are still studiously debarred from all sources of mental improvement. Woman made puddings while their husbands made politics, and were not expected to lift her eyes beyond household cares and

duties. When they read and wrote by stealth, they feared to display their greater knowledge, for few men could tolerate this sort of superiority on the part of his wife. But now our girls walk jubilantly through the whole curriculum of studies. The strongest fortresses of knowledge, deemed almost impregnable to men, fall before them. They have become graduates of universities, doctors of music and medicine, professors of natural science and even first wranglers. In art and literature they have achieved noteworthy distinction, and every day witnesses an increasing number in the ranks of the intellectual. Peeresses rush into print, and society-leaders sigh for the laurel wreath. Within another decade the educational supremacy will be lost, if it is not already so, for it is admitted by competent judges that our girls are more conscientious students and better workers than our boys. The prospect is most encouraging to our sex and race. Improved mothers will produce improved daughters and every generation see an accelerated advancement.

Many of the men have still the hardihood or stupidity to deny that woman really rules. But this is because all sagacious women handle the reins so lightly that their husbands never know they hold them at all. They resemble Queen Caroline who ruled England and George the Second for ten years without being aware of it. In obstinate cases, however, the wife must let her hand be felt. And never yet has there been a martial mouth so hard but what some kind of a bit could be found to subdue it. It will be wise, therefore, of the men to capitulate at once, and no longer insist upon male superiority and male privileges. Their rule is nearly over. But, if in the see-saw of human events, they should, in the future be placed in a subordinate position, we must accord them more generous treatment than they have given us. We must not retaliate. On the contrary, we should resist all attempts to degrade them, and let equality be our motto then as now. Any other policy might act on them as theirs has effected us, and so reduce us again to subjection.

MEAN REVENGE.

"Coffin," said his brother-in-law, an oid bachelor, who roomed in the apartment overhead, "if you'll let me name that strong-lunged wideawake, night-blooming infant of yours I'll buy a gerambulator for him, get him a suit of clothes when he's 5 years old and make a present of a pony and \$100 when he's old enough to ride."

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